

## **REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 13, 2010**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held their regular monthly meeting on Monday, September 13, 2010, 6 PM at the Edward Pope Conference Center. Mayor W. E. Burns presided.

Present were Mayor Burns, council members Barnett, Cullars, Eaton, Pope, Rainey and Tutt. Also present were City Administrator Eskew, City Clerk Danner, City Attorney representative Kayla Cooper and City Police Chief Davis.

Visitors present were the same as listed on the Public Hearing held on same date.

The meeting was opened in prayer by John Scott followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **MINUTES APPROVED**

On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved 6 to 0 the minutes of a Public Hearing held on August 9, 2010 and the regular meeting held on August 9, 2010.

### **MEETING AGENDA APPROVED**

On motion by Cullars, second by Barnett, council approved 6 to 0 the meeting agenda as presented and adding an executive session for a personnel matter to follow immediately after regular agenda items.

### **MAIN STREET – DAVID JENKINS**

Main Street Director David Jenkins advised that the infrastructure for the Rusher Street project is nearing completion. The GEFA Energy Audit grant continues with Barbara Bacon and Mildred Hudson working with interested home owners.

It was noted that the Work Ready status signs are up on gateways into the city.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Chief Davis advised that incidents were down for the month of August. Davis also advised that the Municipal Judge, City Administrator, Mayor and Davis had met concerning the fine limits for Washington and found that the city's fine structure is adequate.

### **SUE DAVIDSON – ELECTRIC UTILITY BILLS**

Mrs. Davidson asked if the city should be considering the construction of a pool and hotel when customers are struggling with high utility rates. Mrs. Davidson was advised that the city's utility rate structure is in line with surrounding utility rates and that the development of more businesses would assist in keeping utility rates lower.

### **HENRY HARRIS – STATUE/ATTRACTIONS**

Mr. Harris advised that he had distributed some photos to council of possible ways to make statues more approachable and usable as teaching tools of history to children and visitors.

### **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Council member Eaton advised that the DDA meeting will be held on September 16, 2010, 8:30 AM at the Farmers State Bank.

Eaton advised that the DDA board is comprised of residents of the city, property owners/business owners within the DDA boundaries. Council member Cullars asked if the DDA boundaries could be expanded. This matter will need to be researched.

## **CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

Kayla Cooper, City Attorney representative, asked that council approve the backing of the hotel project bonds with an Intergovernmental Agreement in form and accompanying resolution and further to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the resolution. This IGA in form will allow Stern Agee to negotiate for better interest rates on the bonds.

On motion by Tutt, second by Cullars, council approved 5 to 1 the IGA in form and the accompanying resolution. Council member Barnett voted against the motion.

## **BEER & WINE LICENSE – 102 W ROBERT TOOMBS AVENUE**

City Clerk Danner asked for council approval of a beer and wine application for a business operating at 102 W Robert Toombs Avenue, for Azeez Farishta, Red Rabbit LLC: DBA: Red Rabbit Express.

On motion by Eaton, second by Cullars, council approved request 6 to 0.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS:**

**RAINEY:** Council member Rainey asked about the collection of debt from John Horton. Rainey was advised that the legal process has begun.

Rainey talked about the need for more small businesses with the upcoming economic development of some three new companies.

**BARNETT:** Council member Barnett expressed concern with the guarantee of hotel project bonds with the current debt load of the city. Barnett was advised that the hotel project and water plant rehab project does not contribute to the debt load.

**TUTT:** Council member Tutt expressed his concern with derogatory statements contained in articles in recent issues of the News Reporter.

**EATON:** Council member Eaton reported some work order issues on Depot Street, and South Alexander Avenue. Eaton also reported collection problems with the Green Grease project.

Eaton further advised that the DDA willingly works with merchants around the square.

**CULLARS:** Council member Cullars asked if any monies had been paid to Green Grease. He was advised that \$13,500 had been paid for purchase of collection containers.

Cullars also asked about discontinuation of electric services for commercial customers with delinquent utility payments. He was advised all commercial customers are disconnected just like any other customer with the exception of three phase meters. Cullars asked that *all* utility customers be treated in a like manner.

## **MICHAEL HORGAN – UTILITY BILLS**

Mr. Horgan complained of high utility bills and further advised that he thought the hotel project was a risky gamble with taxpayers' monies.

## **MAYOR'S UPDATES**

Mayor Burns asked for council approval of the re-appointment of Debbie Jackson to the DDA Board for a four year term. On motion by Pope, second by Barnett, council approved appointment 4 to 2. Council members Rainey and Cullars voted against the motion.

Mayor Burns advised that he had asked John Horton to chair a committee to develop a resource for needs of new businesses that might be started in connection with the prospect of the hotel, casket company, Guardian Center and AFG expansion.

**CHAMBER UPDATE**

Chamber Director Judy Anderson gave a brief update on upcoming events: Mule Day on October 9, Arts Foundation Festival the first weekend in November and the Little Miss/Mr. Wilkes County pageant.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Council entered into executive session at 7:15 PM to discuss a previously approved personnel items.

On motion by Rainey, second by Eaton, council approved 6 to 0 to re-enter open session at 8PM.

Attorney Kayla Cooper advised that one personnel issue was discussed with no final action taken.

On motion by Eaton, second by Rainey, council approved 6 to 0 having the Mayor execute an affidavit for the executive session.

On motion by Rainey, second by Barnett, council approved 5 to 1 assigning the Austin Dabney statue project to the DDA. Council member Cullars voted against the motion.

On motion by Cullars, second by Tutt, council approved 6 to 0 to request that the Georgia State Patrol have a reconstruction team do further study of an accident on August 22, 2010, involving a city police unit. If the reconstruction unit findings are different from the original wreck investigation report, stronger punishment could be imposed.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM.

\_\_\_\_\_MAYOR

\_\_\_\_\_CLERK